

Thesis Title A Comparison of the Reading Perceptions of
Thai and North American Raters on Some
Selected Thai and American Newspaper
Editorials

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to investigate and compare the reading perceptions of Thai and North American raters in their evaluation of the overall organization, fluency of expression, focus, conciseness, sequencing, cohesiveness, and comprehensiveness of Thai and American expository writings.

The raters in this study included two each of Thai and North American teachers teaching English in Bangkok. The reading materials comprised ten editorials each from a random sample of selected Thai and American popular and quality newspapers. The raters expressed their perceptions of each editorial on a five-point scale. Arithmetic mean and standard deviation as well as frequency count were used to describe their perceptions. The non-parametric

Wilcoxon Matched Pair Test and the improvised culture indicative/non-indicative models were used to check for the difference of their perceptions.

An investigation into the perceptions of individual raters showed that three out of the four raters maintained similar trends of perceptions, preferring the American to Thai editorials. The split between the two Thai raters was however blurred when their evaluation values were averaged. An additional study participated in by 28 more raters showed an eye-ball correlation between the original groups' perceptions with the additional group's perceptions. Therefore, the original Thai group's perceptions could be deemed representative of the group.

The mean values indicated that each group of raters preferred the editorials from the newspapers of their own language to the editorials from the newspapers of the other's language. The results of the Wilcoxon Matched Pair Tests and the comparisons on the culture indicative/non-indicative models showed that the two groups had significantly different perceptions of the Thai newspaper editorials, especially those from the popular newspaper, but had no significant difference on the American newspaper editorials. This may be because the Thai raters had a wide exposure to English language while the North American raters maintained a very limited exposure to the Thai language, especially the writing language. The two groups' perceptions of conciseness were

significantly different on the Thai newspaper editorials, especially the quality newspaper editorials, and the American editorials, especially the popular newspaper editorials. This is an intriguing area that needs to be studied in detail. In addition, the two groups were also at odds about the focus of the American editorials and the comprehensiveness of the editorials from the Thai newspapers, especially the popular newspaper.

Also under the study, the North American raters provided their verbal comments. They noted that the beginning, middle, and ending of the Thai editorials clearly violated their expectations. Instead of stating outright the thesis statement, the Thai editorial writers most of the time delayed the focus. Their persuasion followed the feeling-oriented approach and in most of the editorials, the topical issues were not covered comprehensively enough. At the ending, the editorial writers many times threw in a rhetorical question instead of a conclusion. Meanwhile, the North American raters found the organization of most of the American editorials to have followed their expectations except a few cases of unexpected styles or rhetorical fallacies. These are the pointers that need to be further investigated for the benefits of the two language groups in cross-cultural communications.